



Jungle Boy

LYSLE CARVETH

ARVETH

Jungle Boy

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JUNGLE BOY

By LYSLE CARVETH

Illustrated by Anne Vaughan

Angkot was a mountain boy in the Philippines. His feet skimmed the jungle swiftly as any bird. Nimbly he could swing from tree to tree. Then one night when the hunters returned he could not sleep. Something had called and he must follow. In the thickness of the jungle he comes upon a great white deer. His arrow passes through it without harm. It is Ogsa the great white deer god. While they play together the Ogsa tells Angkot he is to go to the lowland people for there are things he must learn from them.

Angkot goes to the lowland people and learns many things — some good, some bad, but he never quite overcomes his loneliness. Then one day disaster threatens the lowland people and it is Angkot who with the help of the Ogsa leads them to safety among his own people.

The story of Angkot is a simple one, full of warmth and beauty. Folk legends and a direct and poetic feeling for language add to its deeply appealing quality.

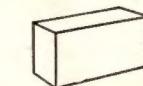
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LYSLE CARVETH

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ANNE VAUGHAN



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For

C. B.

*when he was a little boy in the Philippines;
but it is also for him in America, now that
he is a man, because he needs comforting.*

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CHAPTER I

Angkot and His Friends

THE TWO LITTLE IGOROT BOYS, APONITAO AND LAMANG, sat in the warm dust under a balete tree. They were playing a game with tiny stones, for in the high Luzon mountains of the Philippine Islands, where they lived, there were no toys. But there were many kinds of monkeys and bright-colored birds living in the trees and there were many small wood creatures living in the ground. And there were always plenty of other children in the tribe, though they might be too large or too small for playing games.

All of the Igorot people were dark brown for they lived out of doors and they did not think it necessary to wear any clothes except a long, brightly woven belt called a ba-ag. Then if it rained, their clothing didn't get wet. It was never cold in their mountain home.

Lamang, the fat one, was losing his interest in the game. Besides, he was very warm. He scratched his forehead under the woven band that bound his long, dark hair and slapped fiercely at the fly that ran along his bare brown leg.

"Does that little thing bother you?" asked Aponitao scornfully. "I have been bitten by evil insects many times but I do not cry. See?" He turned his thin brown thigh so Lamang could feel the row of swollen bumps.

Lamang adjusted his ba-ag and leaned back against the tree trunk.

"This game is no good," he said. He swept the ground impatiently with his hand and the little stones went bouncing and rolling down the mountainside. "Can we not think of something more exciting to do?"

"We could call Angkot," Aponitao said hopefully.

"You know what Angkot will be doing? He will

be sleeping under the fern tree with his eyes open. He will not answer you."

"I believe that is called dreaming, not sleeping," Aponitao corrected him lazily. "It is true, Angkot dreams all day. I find it hard to believe some of his stories, but I like to hear him tell them. What do you suppose he is thinking of at this very moment?"

"It was not long ago that I saw him with his mother digging sweet potatoes and it may be that he is not yet deep in his dreams. Let's call him."

They stood and cupped their hands around their mouths to keep the sound together and called loudly:

"Angkot! Angkot!"

Their voices rolled and echoed across the clearing, into the valleys and back up the sides of the mountain. They listened, breathing lightly so as to hear the least sound. There was none.

"He won't answer." Lamang sat down on the roots of the tree.

"We will try once more," Aponitao said. He never gave up as easily as Lamang.

Again the call went forth as one voice and they waited for the echo to come back. Still there was no answer.

"We may as well—" Lamang began.

"Keep still. I think I hear something."

There was a faint crackling far off in the under-brush that seemed to be growing louder. When they heard the soft splash of someone crossing the stream, they sat down and looked at each other with satisfaction.

"I predict that he will come from that direction," Aponitao said and set his face toward the clearing.

But instead, the bushes behind them suddenly parted and the slim brown body of a boy flew past them, turned quickly, and came to a stop just in front of them. They inspected him carefully before they spoke.

"You were asleep, Angkot?"

The small boy shook his head but he was still rubbing his big brown eyes.

"At least, you were dreaming then," said Lamang. "Was it the same dream? It's nearly always the same."

Angkot said nothing, though the far-away look in his eyes deepened. He twisted his long, silky black hair into a harder knot and bound it with his headband. Then he stood on one foot and looked down at his pink, widespread toes.

"It was the Ogsa again, wasn't it?" demanded Lamang. "What did he do this time?"

Angkot's eyes flashed.

"He talked to me. He told me things that no one else knows. He says I'm the only one who believes him."

Lamang spat into the soft dust.

"I don't believe him," he said, "and I don't believe you, either."

Angkot started toward Lamang but Aponitao stepped quickly between them.

"We are all friends here," he said and smiled. Angkot's quick smile answered him.

"Why did you call me?" he asked.

"We have nothing to play. Do you have a game for us?"

Angkot looked at the sun by closing one eye and opening the other. It was a trick he had learned from his father.

"There is a hanging vine near my snare," he said. "We could go there."

They were off at top speed, for though he was the smallest, they knew Angkot would outrun them and be far out of sight before they could get started. Their feet made no noise as they flew along in the soft, dusty trail, barely able to keep near the swift little shadow that ran before them.

"Wouldn't you think he could walk part of the time?" panted fat Lamang. "Ask him to wait. I have no breath left."

But Angkot only laughed and sped on. He loved to run with the wind pushing gently on his face and lifting his hair from his ears.

He found the vine quickly and tested it by pulling down with all his strength. Then he ran back, caught it with a big jump and swung high in the air. A startled kiao flew out of the trees and the two boys on the ground stared after it until its bright yellow body disappeared behind the tall ridges. Angkot swung back to the ground.

"Take your turns," he said.

Aponitao tried first but he was afraid to run hard and his swing was not high. Then Lamang tried but his short, fat legs could not make it swing at all. They boosted him up and he clung clumsily while the others pushed him to and fro. His arms were soon tired and he came down rubbing his round brown belly.

"Watch me now," Angkot shouted. "I will show you something."

He took the vine firmly in his hands, carefully measured four steps back, took a sudden run and jump, and flashed past them up into the branches of the nearest molave tree. A frightened wood pigeon flew off to a narra tree and a small gray monkey squeaked and jumped with astonishment.



"Watch me now. I will show you something."

Lamang and Aponitao gazed at Angkot with open mouths.

"That is nothing," Angkot announced from his perch. "You see this?"

With a mighty screech he hurled himself onto the vine and swung past them to the branch of another tree. He was there only a second before he was back in the first tree again.

"Hola!" he shouted, and made the dizzying round again. On the ground Lamang and Aponitao danced from one foot to the other.

"Again, Angkot! Do it again!"

The small monkey was in a frenzy. It screeched as loudly as the boys.

Angkot flashed about like a butterfly, swinging from tree to tree. He shouted, he taunted them, he hung by his heels, he pretended to be falling, he was everywhere at once. Then suddenly it was over. He came quietly down and gathered his bow and arrow from the ground.

Aponitao came and touched his arm.

"You are a bird, Angkot," he said. "You have no weight. You stand in the air. Now watch me try, though I will not do as well as you did, I am sure."

But Angkot could not wait to watch Aponitao. He slipped away through the bushes to the bend in the trail. Far below he could see the silvery tops

of the trees growing darker under the setting sun. He could feel the night wind that was blowing gently up the canyon. But there was no small cloud of dust anywhere that might mark the hunters coming home. He turned and walked slowly back to the clearing, fingering his bowstring, first with one hand, then the other.

He had wanted to go with the hunters today. It seemed to him that he had been asking to go hunting for years and years but the answer was always the same. They always said that when he was a man he could go. It was hard to wait so long.

Lamang and Aponitao were happy with their little games but he was not. Angkot wanted to do grown-up things. That was why he had practiced so hard to become a good shooter. No one knew how long he had shot at knots in the tree trunks until now he seldom missed. He had never dared tell anyone that the freshly killed monkey found on the trail one day was one he had felled just to test his skill.

Angkot stopped at the edge of the clearing and looked at the place that was his home. Small fires crept out of the wooden logs and licked at the big iron pots that were always there for cooking the food. The flames made flickering outlines on trees and stumps and on the grass houses that sat so firmly

in the branches of the trees. When the moon came up it would make the cogon-grass roofs of the houses look like pure gold.

A woman went to stir the food in the pot and to throw some wood on the fire. Then she went back to the small children and babies rolling and squealing in the grass. Nine or ten dogs were tied by a long line to a tree. Angkot saw Lamang's mother, her baby strapped to her back, take some of the cooked corn from the pot and go to feed the dogs. The hungry animals snapped and snarled and quarreled over every mouthful.

Aponitao and Lamang returned from the vine and flung their tired bodies on the ground near a hollow log. They called to Angkot but he did not want to see them just yet. He went instead to get a drink. He lifted the big bamboo tube high and poured the cool water into the coconut shell. He drank long and thirstily. There was a little water left in the cup and he threw it on the ground, chanting as he had been taught to do, "Spirits go 'way." The grass spirits liked water but they didn't care to have it thrown on them. He had heard that they often brought bad luck to people who were careless about wetting them.

He wandered aimlessly away from the fires and came to the tree houses. All the long ladders were

down now and he decided to go up and put his bow and arrow away. The polished wooden rungs felt cold and hard under his bare feet and he climbed slowly so as to enjoy them as long as he could.

It was dark inside the little house but there was nothing in it except a little wooden bench and some coconut-shell dishes, so he had no trouble in finding the peg on which he always hung his weapon. A sleeping mat slipped from its place and fell on him as he felt his way back. He rolled it and replaced it neatly. Then he went down the ladder to the fires again.

The smaller children were eating their supper of boiled sweet potatoes because they were too hungry to wait for the hunters to come back.

"I can wait until the hunters come back," Angkot said to himself. "Even if they don't come till morning, I can wait. I'm big enough for that."

The two boys called him again and he went over to them. Lamang twisted his fat body to look up at him.

"Lie down here with us," he said lazily. "It is good to rest. Why do you walk about so much, Angkot?"

"I can't rest," Angkot answered. "It's something in my legs. I wish I had gone hunting tonight."

"Hunting!" Aponitao sneered. "You couldn't hunt a monkey. Besides, what can you see at night?"

"I can see anything that moves."

The two boys laughed loudly and Angkot knew they didn't believe him. He left them and went to the edge of the clearing. The first stars were already bright and a great orange moon was coming slowly from behind the mountains. Angkot sat down to watch it. Bigger and higher it came and Angkot's chest swelled with it. It was as if something alive had got inside him. It was a great feeling: a feeling like hunger, but it was not hunger. It grew bigger and bigger inside him and it made him feel like leaping into the air. It made him feel strong and unafraid.

He watched the moonlight gild the light places high on the mountains and deepen the darker ones in the valleys.

"It's not dark at all," he whispered to himself. "I can see and I'm not afraid of anything!"

He went slowly back to the clearing. The wind rustled gently in the talahib grass. A bird chirped once and then was still. Suddenly the dogs burst into an uproar. They pointed their noses upward and sniffed toward the trail. Angkot stopped and listened. He could hear men's voices above the

barking. He ran with great leaps to the fires and shouted: "They're coming! I know they're coming! I can hear them."

Then he ran swiftly down the moonlit trail. He was going to meet the hunters.



CHAPTER II

The Hunters

FROM HIS SHELTER OF BUSHES NEAR THE TRAIL, Angkot watched the hunters come into sight. They walked slowly and steadily, one behind the other. The oldest man was at the end of the line and his feet dragged as he walked. Two strong men had a pole over their shoulders. A wild boar was tied to the pole by his legs and swung back and forth as they walked. Two more men near the middle of the line carried a smaller boar. The limp bodies of some birds dangled from the belt of another man.

But when Angkot saw his father, he nearly

shouted aloud, for his father was carrying a live baby deer in his arms. But Angkot made no sound and in a moment he turned and ran swiftly back to the clearing and pretended that he had seen nothing at all.

The hunters crossed the clearing and washed their feet in the stream. When they came into the firelight, everything came to life. There was calling and laughing and shouting of questions. Women hurried here and there with wood and water. The sticks that held the pigs over the roasting pits must be prepared and the pigs must be cleaned. The smoke rolled upward and the big kettles began to bubble.

Angkot hurried from one person to another but they had nothing for him to do. They would not even answer his questions. He saw his father at the edge of the clearing and he had a rope woven of talahib grass in his hand. He ran over to them and knelt down by the little deer.

"You aren't going to hurt him, are you?"

"I'm just going to tie his legs so that he can't run away," his father said. "We will keep him until he grows big."

Angkot put his hand gently on the baby deer's back. The little animal quivered with fright. Angkot fondled him until he stopped quivering; then

he folded the slender legs under so that the deer would lie down. He brought a cup of water and the deer drank thirstily. He lay down and stroked the soft neck and ears and when the deer became completely quiet, he moved away without disturbing him.

The sweet smell of roasting meat was rising from the pits. He watched the men turn the sticks slowly so the meat would be done on all sides. It made him very hungry to watch the roasting but he could see that only the outside was cooked; there was a long time to wait.

Some men gave him a drink of tapey, a home-made rice wine. It stung his nose and throat like fire. He choked and spat it on the ground. The men laughed and he walked away. But the others were happy. They laughed a great deal and sang songs and their voices came rolling back from the tall mountains.

Two of the big boys began to wrestle on the ground. Usually Angkot would have jumped on top of them and wrestled too, for he liked to test his strength. Tonight he had no feeling for it. There was something alive in him and it would not let him rest. He walked a little way down through the trees and came into a patch of bright moonlight.

The light poured over him and he bathed in it, stretching his arms upward and letting it shine fully in his face. It made him feel strong and full of power; it made him want to climb or run or throw with all his might. But there was something else that wanted to keep him from doing all these things. He turned and went back to the clearing.

The men too were resting now. They were lying full length on the ground and they were telling stories. He settled himself beside his father to listen. The oldest man was speaking.

"No man living can rightly say that he has seen the Ogsa," the old man was saying, "but I have heard from my grandfather that there were several men of long ago who saw him. It is said that some hunters once came upon him in a valley. They wanted to take him alive and began driving him into a deep ravine. They drew closer and closer, but just as they were ready to take him, he changed into a bird and flew away."

"I also have heard of his wings," another said. "One time he was surrounded by some hunters who meant to drive him into the river. The banks were very high and they expected him to stop at the brink. But he did not stop. He leaped across the river like a winged bird. No ordinary animal could have jumped half that far."

"But why did they want to catch him?" Angkot asked.

"He has magic powers," the old man said. "He brings good luck. If he feeds in your valley, all your crops will be bountiful."

"If I could go hunting, I'd find the old Ogsa in no time. I wouldn't let him get away from me either," Angkot bragged. "I'd bring him here and tie him to a tree."

His father clapped his hand quickly over Angkot's mouth. "Speak of the Ogsa only with respect," he said gravely. "No one knows when he may be listening."

The stories of the Ogsa went on. Some said that he came only when the moon was full. Some said that he could speak in many languages. One said that he could make the sick well; another that there were no secrets from him, for he knew and heard all things.

"What does he look like?" asked Angkot.

The hunters shook their heads.

"How could we know?" his father said. "We have heard that he is part deer, part man. We have heard that he is as small as a goat. Others say that he is big like a carabao."

A man went to taste the roasting pigs. Angkot lay staring up at the sky. He could not imagine the

Ogsa being part deer and part man. He would be all deer and his eyes would be black with deep fires in them. He would have great branching antlers and his coat would be pure white like the clouds. It would be fun to talk to the Ogsa. He was sure they could be friends.

The man who had gone to the roasting pits nodded his head and everyone rose at once. The women mashed the sweet potatoes or camotes into a paste and put the paste on a smooth slab of wood. They spread thick green leaves on the ground and the men carried the sizzling meat to the leaves. They all sat down and the feast began with shouts of laughter and sighs of hunger.

Angkot dipped one hand into the camote and bit deeply into the crisp, juicy piece of meat that his father had put in his other hand. Nothing had ever tasted so good in his whole life. He ate very fast so he would get another piece before it was all gone. It was good, good to live in the mountains and eat roast pig in the moonlight. He felt himself swelling with a great happiness.

When they had eaten until there was nothing left but some bones for the dogs and many of the children had fallen asleep where they sat, Angkot saw that the grownups were slowly forming a circle under the trees. He had thought they would be

going up the ladders to bed. He ran to ask his mother about it but she motioned him back to his place.

The fires had all gone out; only the moon lighted the clearing now. The night wind blew among the trees and clicked the bamboos softly against each other.

"Something is the matter?" Angkot asked the woman nearest him.

"You will soon see," the woman said.

The oldest man picked up two stones the size of his fist and went over to the hollow log. He began a strange tattoo, beating on the log with the stones. The sound began softly, then grew louder and louder. Suddenly there was a wild scream and the figure of a man leaped into the circle and began to dance, swaying and twirling to the rhythm of the stones.

It was the tumunoh, the wise man of the tribe. But Angkot did not know him, for he could not see his face. He had a great topknot of feathers fastened to his long hair and so many brass rings on his ankles that they reached nearly to his knees. He began a singsong that sounded like "Oyi-oyo! Oyi-oyo!" He bent forward until his hair swept the ground, and his feet moved faster and faster.

The chant grew louder and louder and Angkot

felt small shivers going up his back. Slowly he too began to sway to the rhythm as all the others were doing. Around and around the tumunoh twisted and twirled, his feet scarcely touching the ground. Gradually the music softened and became slower. At last there was no sound at all. The tumunoh walked out of the circle as if nothing had happened and Angkot gave a sigh of relief. He went at once to his father.

"Why was he doing that?"

"It gives our tribe protection," his father said. "When the Talipi is danced, all the bad spirits are burned in the fire and they can't do us any harm. That's why it is called a fire dance."

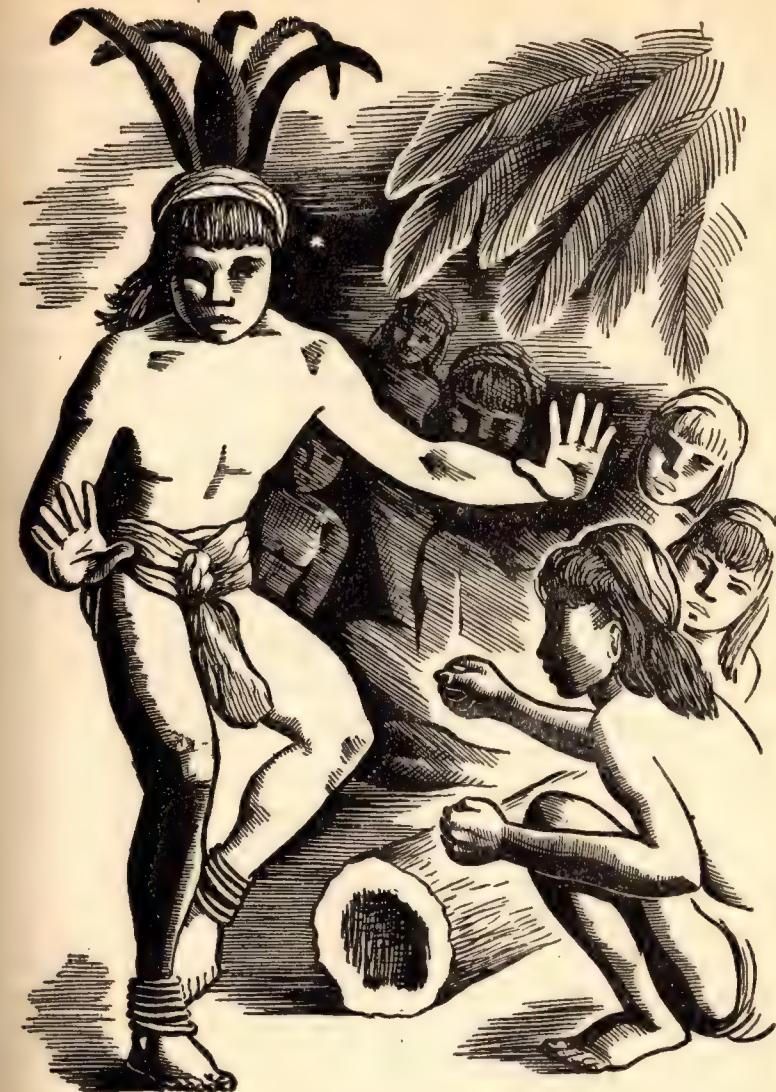
"But how do the bad spirits harm us?"

"They twist our arrows so that they miss, or they hide the game from us so that we go hungry. Sometimes they let our catch out of the trap. They do many things that are bad for us."

"I never saw a spirit," Angkot said slowly. "Does it look like us or what does it look like?"

"No one sees them; they're invisible. But they're around us, day and night. They're like the Ogsa. We don't see them; we just know they are there."

Angkot wandered away, thinking deeply. The others began to sing but he didn't feel like singing. He went out into the moonlight and stared over the



A man leaped into the circle and began to dance.

treetops. Was the Ogsa really out there eating leaves or grass? Or would he be resting in the moonlight? He'd like to see the Ogsa.

He went slowly up the ladder of his father's house in the trees. The babies were sleeping on their mats and he stepped carefully over them and lay down in his own place. He shut his eyes and lay very still for a long time but sleep would not come. Something kept shouting in his head, "The Ogsa! The Ogsa! The Ogsa!"

At last he got up and stood in the dark, listening for a moment before he took his bow and arrows. He went down the ladder so softly that it did not even creak. There was still laughter and singing in the clearing and no one saw him as he went stealthily around them and out to the trail. Then he began to run, easily and noiselessly, down the trail toward the valley.



CHAPTER III

The Ogsa

FAR DOWN THE MOUNTAIN, ANKOT SLOWED TO A stop. He wanted to decide on his trail and to get his bearings. Through the great folds of the hills he could just see the tops of the trees in the forest below. They stretched for miles and miles, all light and dark and blurry in the moonlight. It gave him a new, strange feeling for the forest; a feeling that he knew it well and that it was friendly.

"I used to think it was nothing but trees," he said aloud. "But it isn't. It's alive and crowded with things."

There was a noise at his side and he listened closely. It was only the bamboo stems clicking together in the breeze. A crowded bird squawked in its nest and then the bushes set up a continuous rustle and he decided that some small animal was hunting a midnight supper.

He went on down the trail. He knew when he passed the wild pepper vine for he could smell its fruit. He schooled himself not to be frightened when a tuft of high grass washed against his bare back like a wave against a ship.

When he came to the fork in the trail, he did not know which way to go. He had never been farther than the fork. He listened again and at first he heard nothing but the sound of something digging in the earth and snuffling as it dug. Then, later, he heard the waterfall. It gave him an idea.

"The Ogsa must drink somewhere. It may be that he will go there. I might come upon him drinking. Yes, the waterfall is the first place to go."

It was hard to tell just where the waterfall was. There was no blue-white mist over any of the hollows, but the sound of the falls seemed to come from the right. Angkot would have to leave the trail here. He plunged into the bushes eagerly, his bow held high above his head. It was much slower going through the heavy underbrush. The saplings

sprang back after his passing and switched him sharply. The bare roots and stones hurt his feet. It was so dark he could see nothing in front of him, and there was only one small star in the piece of sky he could see through the rift in the trees when he looked up.

Then it seemed that something was following him. He could hear a whirring and crashing behind him. No matter which way he turned the thing went that way too. But when he came into the moonlight for a moment, he saw that it was only a big brown fruit-bat and he waited until it had gone blundering past him.

He sniffed the wind blowing softly across the hills and listened for the night noises. But there were no noises now. It was as if a heavy silence had shut down on everything. Even the sound of the waterfall was gone and he could no longer tell which way to go.

Angkot parted the thick curtain of vines in front of him. The white flower bells shook their yellow dust in his face and powdered his hair. It got in his nose and he sneezed suddenly, then covered his mouth with his hand, but it was too late to stop the sound. It spread in the silence like ripples on a pond.

He tried to make his way in the opposite direc-

tion, stepped into a hole and fell headlong. He got up and tried in another direction. Vines had interlaced the bushes and trees until they made a solid wall in front of him. He got down on his hands and knees and pushed and shoved with his head until his shoulders came through.

There was a small natural clearing on the other side and he crawled on through, pulling his bow and arrows after him. Then he heard a sound and he stopped stock-still. It was the sound of tender grass being torn from its roots and of grinding teeth; it was the sound of an animal feeding. Angkot stole behind a sheltering bush and peered cautiously around one side of it.

His heart gave such a big jump that he nearly cried out. A great white deer stood in the full moonlight, cropping the lush grass as if he hadn't an enemy in the world.

Angkot's knees trembled so much that he was afraid they were going to let him fall. But he remembered what his father had taught him. Aim just behind the shoulder for deer. He put up his bow and fitted the arrow carefully. He hoped the bow was strong enough. He pulled back hard and let the arrow fly.

It went straight and unswerving and he heard it pierce the tree directly back of the animal. The

deer went on eating as if nothing had happened. Angkot reached for another arrow and the deer looked up and said, quite distinctly, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Angkot turned to run away but his feet got twisted in the long grass and he fell head over heels. He got up hastily. The deer was eyeing him unhappily.

"Have you any idea how many people would suffer if you had killed me with your silly shooting?" he asked. "Thousands of them. Why in the world did you do it?"

Angkot hung his head. He didn't want to say that his father had taught him to kill because that would be blaming someone else for his own faults. He was ashamed and he didn't know what to say. He dug his toe into the long grass and let his bow slip quietly to the ground behind him.

"That's better now," the deer said and he took a step toward him. Angkot backed away.

"Oh, there's nothing to be afraid of," the deer said. "I wouldn't hurt you. I've never hurt anything in my life."

Angkot stared at him and the big deer went on talking.

"I make things grow, you know. I travel all over these mountains for people I like. I go to the low-

lands also. Wherever I go, they have great crops, especially corn. I'm guardian of all the deer in these mountains. They never decide anything unless they ask me first."

"Maybe you know of the Ogsa, then," Angkot said timidly. "I have heard that he lives in these mountains."

The deer smiled ever so faintly. "Some call me that," he said. "But the name really makes no difference. I'd have my work to do with any other name."

Angkot's mind was busy trying to make himself believe that he had really found the Ogsa. He said nothing at all. The Ogsa hummed a little tune and then he said, "See here, why don't we get better acquainted? I can do a trick. Can you do this?" He reared up and stalked about the clearing on his hind legs.

Angkot stared at him a moment and then he laughed.

"Of course," he said. "I walk that way all the time."

The Ogsa scratched an antler with his front hoof.

"Maybe you're right," he said. "Do you know any other tricks?"

"I can turn a somersault like a monkey," Angkot said. He somersaulted and the Ogsa looked pleased.

"Very nice," he said. "I must try that sometime." There was a little silence and he tossed his head restlessly.

"I feel a little skittish," he said. "Would you care to have a game of tag?"

Angkot had no idea how to play tag but it looked as if the Ogsa expected to be chased, so he ran after him. The Ogsa ran awkwardly at first and that set Angkot to laughing. He thought he would catch the Ogsa easily, but no matter how fast he ran, the Ogsa ran faster and they went around the clearing at a great pace. In and out, around and around they went, dodging and laughing until they were both out of breath. Angkot knew he could never catch the Ogsa, so he played a trick on him. He hid under a low bush. But the big animal found him immediately and came up, his eyes glowing like great fireflies in the dark.

"Tired, eh?" he said. "Must have had a big day. I suppose you'd like a drink. Try this." He pulled a flower cup from its vine and Angkot drank the cool sweet liquid from it.

Suddenly the Ogsa looked up at the sky. Then he sniffed the air.

"Only an hour until dawn," he said. "We'll have to get out of here. Like to take a ride? Just hang on." He put his head down and Angkot grasped his

antlers and before he knew it, he was sitting on the deer's back.

They set off at once, moving swiftly, having no trouble at all with the bushes and vines and fallen logs. The Ogsa sailed over rivers as if on wings. Angkot nearly fell off at one time for he was getting very sleepy. He had lost all idea of the direction they were taking but it didn't seem to matter. The moon had gone now and the stars were pale in the sky. He couldn't see the high dark curve of the mountains any more but he didn't feel uneasy. He knew that the Ogsa would take care of him.

They were traveling more slowly now. The big deer seemed to be searching for something. He circled several times before he stopped in a thicket of fern trees. The grass was high and soft and the air was fragrant with patchouli and ilang-ilang flowers. The Ogsa pawed some of the grass together with his foot and Angkot slid off his back and dropped on top of the pile in a small heap. He just couldn't seem to get strength enough to stand up, though he tried very hard to do so.

The Ogsa looked at him gravely. Then he spoke.

"You'll find it very different here," he said in a kindly voice. "They have a thing they call civilization. Part of it is good; part of it isn't. I've watched it grow step by step for hundreds of years. I believe

it is going to grow into something the whole world wants. It may be that you can play a part in it. You can be the bridge here in your own country between the highland and the lowland peoples. Maybe you can choose the best of what they have here to take back up there with you."

Angkot stared at him, not understanding enough to say a word.

"All right, I'll put it this way," the Ogsa went on. "People have to have leaders; someone to show them new ways. It may be that you can do that. Help them all you can. Get them away from the idea that they must be forever killing something. Make them forget their childish quarrels. Teach them that friendliness and kindness can do twice as much as fighting."

The small boy still stared and said not a word.

"Oh, well," the Ogsa sighed and bumped Angkot gently in the rear with his antler. "I guess that's too much to remember. Just be kind—to everything and to everybody—that's enough. Now go to sleep and I'll stand right here and watch over you."

He began to hum a little song that had no words, but his deep voice was so pleasant that Angkot closed his eyes to listen better. He intended to close them only for a moment, for there were dozens of questions he wanted to ask the Ogsa. But when he



They set off at once, moving swiftly.

opened them again it was late afternoon and the sun was streaming over him.

A white flower had fallen from its stem and was entangled in his hair and leaves and grass were sticking all over his moist warm body. Black-and-white-and-gold hour birds sang their weird calls from the acacia trees but there was no sign nor sound, nor even a bent twig to show where the Ogsa had gone.

Angkot walked out into the clearing and looked around. He was in a strange country. There were no mountains at all, only flat lowlands and a wide, slow-moving river. He was hungry too. He began to look for some plants that he could eat. His father had taught him that any plants the ants liked, people too could eat. He hunted and hunted but he found nothing. There were no berries on the bushes. He would have eaten some flowers if he could have found the right kinds. There were no flowers either.

He went to the clearing again and far down the trail he saw a cloud of dust rising. It meant that someone was coming. It might even be his own village people coming to hunt for him. He stood near the trail so they would be sure to see him.

But when the caravan came nearer, he almost cried. He would have, if he had not been a moun-

tain boy. For they were not his people at all. He had never seen people like these before. Their bodies were covered in white and they wore no ba-ag. Even their heads were covered with some stiff, flaring things to keep away the sun. There were as many as twenty of them and they carried great bundles of nito vine and of bamboo and rattan.

The line stopped when they were in front of Angkot and the first man spoke to him. His words were not Angkot's language at all and he understood nothing the man said. But he tried to tell him how he came there and the man did not understand him either. He dug his toes in the dust, while the men talked together, and wondered what he should do. He did not wonder long for the first man came over and took Angkot in his strong arms and swung him up on top of his bundle and before he could say anything, the line was moving on.



CHAPTER IV

The Lowland Village

ANGKOT COULD SEE VERY LITTLE OF THE VILLAGE where the caravan finally stopped, but he knew that many people must live there because of the noise they made. Dogs barked and children screamed and old men shouted questions. Women came and took away the big bundles the men had brought, then hurried back to their cooking. Everyone except Angkot seemed to have work to do. It made him feel strange and he would have run away to hide if he had known where to go.

When the older folk had gone and the crowd had

thinned, the children saw him. They crowded close around him and stared. A boy his own size sniffed Angkot's cheek and another touched a lock of his long hair curiously. But when they tried to examine his bow and arrows, Angkot raised his arm threateningly and they fell back to a wider circle, still staring at his bare brown body.

"What are you called?" one boy asked. Angkot could not answer because he did not know what the boy had said.

"Can you imagine it?" the boy said. "He doesn't know his own name. Maybe in the mountains they don't have names."

A girl said, "We could give him a name. Who has a good name for this boy?"

Someone said "Negrito." A small boy yelled "Chato" and then covered his mouth, astonished at his own boldness. A little girl in a red-flowered skirt spoke.

"I think Polon would be a good name till we're sure he hasn't another one. Let's call him Polon."

They all said Polon together, experimentally. It pleased them and they said it again, gleefully, testing it on their tongues. Then, as suddenly as dust in the wind, they scattered and ran to their homes. They left Angkot standing there alone in the dark. He started to follow them but they ran in

all directions. He would have liked to follow the little girl who had given him his name but she disappeared as completely as the others.

Presently the man who had carried him came back and took his hand. They walked together to the man's house. It was not high in the tree as Angkot had expected; it was set on four short posts and the ladder going up was very short.

The mother and her children, two boys and two girls, were sitting on the floor eating their supper. Angkot was so hungry that he reached his hand to take some of the rice and fish at once, but his hand was stopped before it touched the food. The elder boy had seized his wrist. He tried to reach with the other hand but that, too, was held. He waited, without protest, though his mouth was wet at sight of the food.

The man and woman talked together rapidly; the two girls had hastily scrambled away from the table when Angkot sat down and were still staring at him from a distance. Finally, the boy, still holding his wrist, led him into the next room and left him there.

The youngest girl put some rice and fish in a coconut shell and pushed it across the floor of the little room with her foot. So Angkot ate alone, using

both hands, and swallowing with great gulps. When he had finished, he went back to the other room and would have sat with them, but they refilled his dish and set it again in the other room.

The supper was finished and cleared away. The girls brought the sleeping mats and began to unroll them. They spread them neatly, the boys' near the father, the girls' near the mother. Angkot looked carefully; there was none for him. Then the little girl found an old frayed mat and rolled it through the door to him. He spread it in the bare little room and lay down with a sigh. Angkot was asleep almost at once, breathing softly. He grew happy too, for the Ogsa's head came right through his window and smiled at him. He ran to the window to get on the Ogsa's back but someone in the next room heard him and called to him.

The Ogsa melted away right before his eyes, and then it was morning and they were all rolling their mats and putting them in their places. Angkot rolled his too, and put it away. Then he went to the other room.

The breakfast of fried rice was ready; he sat down to eat. The woman scolded and shook her head and the smallest girl ran for his shell and filled it and put it in the little room. So he ate alone once more

and wondered, for they had all eaten together in the mountains and the visitor received more than his share.

When they had finished in the other room, they passed the wet towel to each one so that they might clean their mouths and fingers. It did not go to Angkot. The older girl took a different one and threw it through the door to him.

The man and the boys were going to work in the fields. The carabao was already tied to the tree in the yard and was dreamily rubbing his long horns against the rough trunk. When the boys untied him and got on his back, he shambled off eagerly, for he was strong and liked to work.

The girls fed the chickens and the pig that shared the yard with two dogs and a goat. The mother and the smallest girl began putting clothes in a big woven basket, for they were going to the river to wash. The other girl went to the granary and brought a basket of brown rice. She poured a little into a stone bowl and pounded it with a piece of rounded wood. When the husks were gone from that in the bowl, she put it in a basket and poured more grain in the stone bowl.

Angkot watched her for a long time but she did not speak or look at him. The way the sun shone on her round cheek and the way she wiped the sweat

from her face with her arm made him think of his mother digging in the hillside for potatoes. It made him unhappy to think of it and he didn't want to watch any longer.

He went noiselessly away, out around the granary and through the yards until he came to a trail that led out of the village. He didn't know where it would take him; it might be the one the caravan had brought him over. It might even lead to the place where the Ogsa had left him. The more he thought of it, the faster he wanted to go. He was soon trotting along with a smile on his face.

The path didn't go to the mountains. It went straight to the river, and many things were happening there. Along the edges of the stream women washed their clothes and spread them on the bushes to dry. Two carabaos, idle for the day, soaked themselves in the deepest part of the stream. Children of all ages played in the water. Some waded in the shallows, holding their white clothing high. Others dived and swam in the depths. Angkot plunged in and swam out to the larger boys.

They didn't want him near them. They threw stones and small sticks just in front of him so that the water splashed in his eyes. He swam back out of their range. He had always loved to swim; he didn't want to miss a chance to swim now. He dived and



He swam in great curves like a fish.

swam in great curves like a fish and came up and dived again. The children stopped their playing and came to watch him but no one spoke to him or came near him. He gave up, at last, and went to sit alone on the opposite bank of the river.

The water was still dripping from his hair when he saw one of the women coming toward him. It was the wife of the man who had brought him in the caravan and she had something white in her hand. She motioned for him to follow her and she went to her house. She tossed his ba-ag and the roll of white that she carried into his room. He went up the ladder and brought them back. She motioned him back in the room and he went in and sat down. Then he saw that the roll was clothing; a white shirt and white pants like the other children in this village wore. He held them carefully in his finger and thumb and went to the door again. The woman nodded vigorously and he went back inside. She wanted him to wear the clothes.

The shirt went on easily enough. It was something like crawling into a hollow log. He writhed a little when the coarse cloth touched his skin. The pants were different. He didn't know what to do with the wet, loose end of his ba-ag. It kept hanging outside. Then when he pulled the pants up to their place, they wouldn't stay up. He went down to

the woman, holding the fullness in one hand.

The woman smiled kindly at him and showed him how to turn the pants around the right way and to tie the draw-string so they would stay up without holding. He was surprised that her hard hand was so gentle when it touched him.

But the clothing made him feel stiff and uncomfortable. The day seemed to have become much warmer. He went back into the house and lay flat on the bamboo floor of his little room. The cool air came through the wide cracks and made him comfortable. Before long he was asleep. He was awakened by the voices of children. They were playing a game under the house. They bounced their little rubber balls with the sides of their feet. He put his eye against a crack so that he could see them better.

They were talking, but Angkot could make nothing of what they said.

"Why can't he play with us?" the girl asked.

"He's a mountain boy, that's why."

"I don't know what that means," the girl said. "Is it something bad?"

"He isn't like us at all. Look at his long hair. He's just a wild Igorot. You wouldn't like to play with a wild boy, would you?"

"Well—if he was nice—" the girl said slowly. They both looked up then and saw Angkot watch-

ing. They ran away quickly but Angkot saw that one was the girl with the red-flowered skirt and she smiled at him before she went.

He went down the ladder and sat under the papaya tree. There was nothing for him to do. The smallest girl had come back from the river and, now that her work was over, she had nothing to do either. She came over to his tree and walked around him three times to attract his attention. Angkot would not look at her and so she sat in front of him, in exactly the same position that he was sitting. When he moved his arm, she moved her arm. If he turned his head, she turned her head. Then she laughed at him and he gave her a tiny smile.

She pointed at her little round chest and said "Marcela." When the older girl came out to feed the dogs she said "Felisa." The older boy came from the fields with the carabao and she said "Vicente." She said all the names over and over and at last he began to imitate her. When he succeeded in saying them, she clapped her little hands and crowed like a rooster. That was how he learned all the names, Marcela and Felisa, Vicente and Manuel. He pointed to himself and said "Angkot" but she did not understand.

Then she began to follow him. Whenever there was no work to do in the house, she was hovering

near. He could not understand what she wanted, for in the mountain village, girls did not play with boys. The girls lived together in their own big house and played with each other.

It was always Marcela who brought his food to his little lean-to room. It was Marcela who put out his clean clothes and washed his dirty ones. She tried to teach him the game the others had been playing with their little rubber balls. She kept it bouncing a long time—her little brown foot flashed sideward and backward like a bird. But he could not learn it and he didn't like to play games anyway.

He fell hard one day when he was running down the path and gashed his knee on a rock. It hurt badly and the sight of blood sickened him. He sat down against a tree trunk and closed his eyes. He never knew how she knew he was hurt, but when he opened his eyes, Marcela was there, binding his knee with a long white bandage.

"I'm your angel bantay," she said shyly. "Do you not need a guardian angel? I will go everywhere you go and watch over you. I will do many good things for you."

Angkot did not understand the words she said but he felt her friendliness. Had the Ogsa not said that it was important to be friendly? He leaned

over and for only a second put his soft brown cheek against Marcela's. It had a strange effect on her. She gasped, giggled happily, and then ran hopping and jumping down the road like a fleeing rabbit. Angkot watched her until she was entirely out of sight and he was greatly astonished.



CHAPTER V

The Education of Angkot

APRIL AND MAY WENT BY AND ANGKOT STILL LIVED in the village in the lowlands. Only now he was called Polon and he had learned to answer to that name. He knew the names of the children in the house and he could speak a few words in their dialect. But he knew and they knew, that he was not one of them, no matter how hard he tried to be like them. He had thought, now that his clothes were exactly like theirs, that he would do all the things they did.

But it seemed to make no difference at all. Ang-

kot never sat with the others in the big room. His food was still set in a separate bowl in the lean-to; his mat was spread alone there every night.

He had tried hard to make friends with some of the boys. He had shown them how to make a blow-gun of bamboo that would stun a bird in the top of a tree. He had made snares by the dozens and taught them how to use them. He let the others win in climbing and running and wrestling contests, even when he knew he was the stronger. But they didn't want him with them; they ran when they saw him coming.

It made Angkot very sad and he was beginning to plan some way of getting back to the mountains again. He was thinking of running away, but something happened before he could get started.

He was awakened very early one morning by the others hurrying about their work and dressing themselves with unusual care.

He went to Marcela at once. "You are going some place?" he asked. She looked at him in surprise.

"The school begins today. Are you not going to get ready?"

He didn't want to tell her that he had never heard of a school or that he didn't know what one did there, so he asked another question.

"Must I go there?"

"Of course," she said. "We all go. It is a place to learn things."

He was fairly excited by the time they had all eaten and put on clean clothes and brought the books from the big box. He was thinking that perhaps this was a new way to go hunting, but instead of going to the woods they went straight to a large house with a fence around it. There were many trees in the yard around the large house and many children played there. They all carried books; not one of them had a bow and arrow. Some of the children stopped to stare at him. Most of them went on with their games.

Suddenly a bell rang and the playing stopped as if by magic. The children went inside, walking quietly, one behind the other. Inside, they all found seats and wriggled hurriedly into them. Angkot had been watching the others so busily that all the seats were taken and now there was none for him. He stood alone in the aisle, a little frightened, not knowing what to do.

A man who seemed to Angkot large enough to be a giant, stood at the front of the room. The giant kept looking at him and he couldn't think where he could go to get away from those eyes. The other children began to snicker. Then the man spoke and the room was quiet instantly.

"Who is this boy who doesn't sit down?" he asked.

Felisa rose from her seat. "His name is Polon, sir."

The teacher took up his pen and a white card.

"Polon what?" he said.

"We don't know. He is just Polon."

"Tell his father to come and talk to me."

The girl was beginning to be frightened. "He doesn't have a father," she said. "He doesn't have anyone but us and we don't know anything about him." She sat down and covered her face with a book.

"We are wasting time," the teacher said. "Find him a seat somewhere."

A small boy moved over and Angkot slid into the seat beside him.

"Your name is very funny," the boy whispered. "I have never heard a name like Polon What."

Angkot watched them all. They had all found something to do. They rustled through their books. They made small black marks on white paper with bits of wood that they held in their hands. They went up in small groups and talked to the teacher and came back to open more books. They spoke only in soft whispers and they whispered only if the teacher was not looking.

Angkot couldn't see why they were looking in the books. There was nothing there but the small black marks. He was tired of sitting there with nothing to do. He got up and went to the window.

"We will remain in our seats," the teacher said. Angkot didn't hear him, for he was watching a flock of pigeons flying so high that they looked like bits of paper in the sky. A big boy came and took his arm and led him back to his seat.

Angkot was quiet for a time and then something poked him in the back. He turned around and the little girl behind him smiled. He was entranced, for her black hair was thick and wavy and stuck out in all directions exactly like that of a man who came once to trade salt with his father. He laughed aloud and the little girl laughed with him. The children around them began to laugh too, and the teacher came striding down the room and took Angkot to the front and made him sit on the floor.

It grew very quiet and the children worked busily. The teacher talked endlessly to the children. Angkot squirmed and twisted in one direction and then another. Then he found that if he turned completely around, he could see through the open door. He sat a long time looking out into the warm sunshine at the green grass of the yard and at the waving branches of the trees. He got up and, with

less noise than a mouse, he slipped out of the door and no one saw him go.

He ran in the wind for a while. Then a beautiful blue butterfly flew by and he chased it until it went over the trees. His feet were on a path and he followed it, not caring where it took him. It went to the house he had left that morning. The woman was pounding rice in the yard and did not see or hear him. It was cool and quiet in the house; he put down his mat and arranged himself comfortably upon it. In a moment he was asleep and the school was far from his thoughts.

They woke him early the next day, but he pretended to be very sick and he did not go to school. The next day he hid in the bushes until the children had gone. Another time he ran away before they reached the school and he didn't return until dark. Manuel and Vicente learned to walk one on each side, holding his arm firmly until he was inside the schoolhouse door.

After a while, he learned to sit quietly and to make the black marks with the pieces of wood. Then there was a kind of game he played every day with the teacher. Angkot would hold an open book in his hands and the teacher would point at a black mark on the book and make a strange sound in his throat. When Angkot made a sound exactly

like the teacher's, the man was pleased. He would smile and nod his head and sometimes he would praise him. Angkot liked to make the teacher happy; he would have been willing to make the sounds all day but the teacher did not seem to have time to listen to him.

Angkot found another way of pleasing the teacher, too. It was called numbers. The teacher would pick up a number of things from his desk and he never seemed to know how many he had. The children always had to tell him how many he was holding. For a time, it puzzled Angkot as much as it puzzled the teacher. Then one night Angkot had a dream and it gave him the answer.

He dreamed he was back in his mountain village and had been allowed to talk for a long time to the Tumunoh. The wise man took him into his grass house and he saw the long blade of bermuda grass hanging by the door. There were many knots in it; one for every day of the month.

When Angkot woke up he forgot the dream but when he was running to school, a long blade of talahib grass lay on the path and he stopped to pick it up. It knotted easily in his fingers and he saw in a flash that now he could answer the teacher's questions. He could tie as many knots as the teacher had objects and then count the knots. It



A beautiful blue butterfly flew by.

was awkward at first, tying the knots behind his back, but when he had counted and given the right answer, the teacher praised him. So he always carried blades of grass in his pockets on school days and the other children looked at him with wonder in their eyes.

Reading the books was hardest of all. He could make nothing of the letters on the white pages. No matter how hard he stared at the pages, no words came out of them. The other children always grew impatient and wanted to say the words for him. Or they giggled when it was his turn to read. He began to wish that he could run away, at least for that part of the day in which reading came.

He began to see that it was quite useless to go to school anyway. He had learned to do nothing but sit still. He hadn't molded an earthen jar, or made a ladder tied with vines. He had not even shaped the head of one arrow for his bow. He was forever listening but never hearing the things he wanted to hear; sounds like monkeys and birds chattering in trees, a wood pigeon calling; the faint voices of the spirit people; the piteous cry of a small animal caught in a trap. Those were the things that had meaning. They were the things he wanted to hear. His thoughts made him so sad

that he never played when the others did. He went instead and sat under the trees and thought only of his lost life.

He was there one day wriggling his toes in the dry dust when something cool fell on his face. He looked around quickly but no one was there. Then a leaf fell on him and he saw a laughing face peering at him through the branches. A little girl climbed down the tree and stood shyly against the trunk.

Angkot said, "Hello," and was surprised that he had spoken her dialect without thinking of it at all.

"I see you sitting here every day," she said. "Do you not like to play?"

"No."

"It is good for one to play," she said gravely. "Maybe then, you do not like the school."

"It is good, I guess," he admitted grudgingly. "But with my people it is different."

She wanted to know about his people and he began to tell her of the tree houses and of the gardens on the hillsides and the long hours of play in the forest. The bell rang and neither of them wanted to go in but she said she would come there every day and he said that he would wait there for her. It made him happy to think of it. He thought

of it so hard that the teacher had to call his strange name, Polon, three times before Angkot heard him.

He was there waiting the next day and the girl came running when she saw him.

"Now tell me some more," she begged.

Angkot began to tell her of the god, Lumawig, whose home was in the sky now, but who had once lived in Angkot's own mountain village. His father had shown him the very stones that had made the house of the god. He told her how Lumawig had taken two pieces of bamboo and fashioned the first Igorot people. When some of these children of the god died and were buried in the ground, the trees of the forest sprang from their graves.

Another day he told her of the spirit people that lived in certain trees and the tree could never be disturbed without great harm coming to the disturber. He wanted some day to tell her how the Ogsa had brought him to the lowlands but he could not tell her yet. He wanted her to believe that story when he told her.

She brought her reading book one day.

"I don't know half as many stories as you do, so I'll read you a story," she said. She read easily and her voice was pleasant. For the first time Angkot understood why they worked so hard to

read in the books. It was because the books told them stories. Another idea came to him, too. He brought his own book the next day.

"Maybe you could read this to me?" He pointed to his lesson. She read it through and he asked her to read it again.

"Only once more," he begged. She read it again and closed the book. There was a far-away look in his eyes that puzzled her. When he said nothing for several minutes, she began to worry.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked. He didn't answer for a time. Then he asked her what her name was.

"Angela," she said. "Why?"

"It isn't important now," he said. Then the bell rang and they ran to their rooms.

When the teacher called his group up to read, Angkot was tingling all over. He could hardly keep his eyes on his book. His turn came at last and he stood bravely, though his knees were trembling. He began back at the beginning of the story and read to the end, word by word. He did not hesitate; he missed not a single word. The children dropped their books to stare at him. The teacher watched him closely. When he reached the end, Angkot sat down, his face glowing redly.

"Very well done, Polon," the teacher said. "I

am amazed as well as gratified. I did not know you could read so well."

Angkot smiled happily, wriggling in his seat.

"In fact," the teacher said gravely, "I did not know anyone could read so well with his book upside down."



CHAPTER VI

Angkot and the Guardian Angel

NOW THAT HE HAD LIVED SO LONG IN THE LOWLAND village and the village children still did not let him do all the things they did, Angkot was beginning to wonder if it was because he had not made himself enough like them. As far as he could see, if he did not take his long hair into consideration, he was exactly like them on the outside. But could it be that he was not like them on the inside?

He asked Marcela about it one day. "It is very sad," he said. "I think I am not growing to be like you here. Can you see how it is that I am different?"

Marcela studied him carefully before she answered. "You are a little different," she said, "but not much. What is the matter?"

"I am always wanting things you do not have. Today I want to hear the singing trees and I think you do not have any."

Marcela looked as if she had not heard him rightly.

"How could a tree sing?"

"It isn't really the tree that sings; it's the spirits that live in the tree."

Marcela looked very grave. "Our tree spirits never sing," she said. "They keep very still so that no one will find them. Sometimes the tree shakes for nothing. Then we know they are angry. And we never harm a tree that we know a spirit lives in."

"Why?"

"It brings very bad luck. The son of my father's uncle was a brave, strong man and he kicked a spirit's tree in anger and at once his foot became lame. It never got well again."

Angkot nodded. "I have heard," he said, "that it is always good to obey the spirits." Then he told her about the Sacred Grove, high in his mountain land. He had gone there many times alone and lain on the soft grass and looked up through the

greenness to the deep blue sky where a soft cloud floated. And he had heard, ever so faintly, the music. It was a beautiful singing without words—many voices joining together—and it never grew loud or swollen and it made him feel very happy to be there listening.

Marcela wanted to ask who made the music but her mother called just then and she had to run back to the house. Angkot wandered down a path that ended in the woods around the school. It was a holiday and it was very quiet there. He sat down at the foot of a tree to think again of his mountain home. But it was not the mountain people that came to his mind; it was the Ogsa.

It seemed so very long ago that he had taken his long, long ride on the back of the big white animal. He had waited and waited for the deer to put his head in the window of his little lean-to room and speak to him again. He had walked far down the trail and found the very spot where he had gone to sleep with the deer watching over him. He had stayed until late in the evening but the Ogsa had not come.

"He's forgotten about me; I'll never see him again." He had said it aloud and he was startled when his voice echoed back from the trees.

"I wouldn't say that," a low voice answered. It

seemed to be coming from the tree and Angkot looked up quickly. "He may have important things to do in some other place," the voice went on. It was such an odd little voice—a fairy voice—like a mosquito blowing on a reed. Angkot knew it must be a spirit voice. But he was not sure what kind of spirit.

"Who are you?" he called.

There was no answer for a long time and he wondered if he had been too bold. He said no more and waited anxiously.

"I suppose I'm an angel," the voice said at last. "I've been sent here to look after certain people. If they've trouble coming, I warn them of it. Just now I'm looking for a boy from the mountains. I have a message for him—"

"You're the Ogsa! You must be the Ogsa!" Angkot cried, jumping to his feet. "Where are you? Let me see you."

The angel laughed a silvery laugh. It was true that the Ogsa had not laughed like that. "But you could see me," the angel went on, "if you looked in the right place. Don't you see something white?"

"But the Ogsa—" Angkot started to say.

"You don't think of anything but that old deer, do you?" the angel said angrily. "You'll never see my wings or my blue dress or the flowers in my

hair because you're half blind. You're Ogsa-blind, that's what you are. Well, you can have your Ogsa; I don't stay where I'm not wanted." There were no more sounds from the tree.

Angkot shouted "Angel! Angel!" as loud as he could. He walked around and around the tree; he beat his thighs in despair. But he saw no one and there were only flying birds and chattering monkeys to answer him. He finally went home and told Marcela all that had happened.

"But it was an angel bantay," she cried. "She wants to be your guardian angel. Oh, I'm glad. Now you will have good luck."

"She can't give me luck when she won't even talk to me. I tell you she flew away and she might never come back. Why did I have to talk so much?"

Marcela tried to comfort him. "They nearly always come back," she said. "But you must find her yourself; she won't hunt for you."

That was how he came to spend so much of his time under the tree. Every moment that he was not actually busy, he was there watching for the angel. He went to school early, so that he could stop by. He ran to the tree at recesses. At noon he carried his lunch there and ate it, always leaving one of his choicest bits for her to eat. He never went home



He was there watching for the angel.

at night without stopping to pat the tree trunk gently or to call softly. But there was never any answer nor anyone in sight.

Angkot scarcely thought of school now. He was almost frantic in his search for the angel. But Angela could not guess what had happened to him. She went every noon to their old meeting place and he did not come. She wrote a note and sent it, with much secrecy, by Nicasio to Angkot's desk. When he did not make any answer at all, Angela knew that the matter was very serious. She followed him one noon and waited in the bushes until he had seated himself by the tree and was staring anxiously into the branches. She came up to him.

"You do not come to our tree any more. Is it because this is a better tree? Or do you not like to talk to me?"

He wanted to tell her to go away and not bother him but she looked so worried and ready to cry that he thought it better to tell the whole story. So he told her of the beautiful little angel that had come to watch over him and how he had angered her and she had flown away and now he must watch every day and wait for her until she came again.

"How do you know she was beautiful?" Angela asked. "Did you see her?"

"No, but she said she had a blue dress and flow-

ers in her hair, so she must have been beautiful, don't you think?"

"Yes, I suppose she was," Angela agreed. "But do you really need a guardian angel? You have me, you know."

"But an angel is different," Angkot said. "She brings me luck. And she has a message, too. It must be important."

Angela went thoughtfully away and left him still gazing into the branches. She did not follow him again and she wrote no more notes. He did not see her for days and days.

Then one noon when he looked up from eating his lunch, there she was, only a short distance away, in the same thicket where he was keeping watch. Angela had brought her lunch and she too was sitting under a tree. Now and then she got up and walked around the trunk, looking carefully among all the branches.

Angkot went over to her.

"You are hunting for something?"

"Yes," she said, "I'm looking for a boy angel. I need one very badly. There must be one here somewhere."

"Why do you need a boy angel?"

"He could help me do things and I could play

with him sometimes," Angela said. "I think it would be nice, don't you?"

"No," Angkot said and went back to his tree. He thought a great deal about the boy angel after that. Sometimes he did not think of his own angel for a long time. He tried to think what it would be like if Angela went to play with someone else. He could hardly bear to think of it.

She came every day for a week and he watched her from the corner of his eye. He was quite frightened the day there really was a voice from her tree but it was only a parrot calling. But she finally came to him.

"I don't know what to do," she sighed. "I want an angel very badly. I thought that was one I heard, but it wasn't. How can I find my angel, Polon?"

Her full red lips were trembling and shining tears were rimming her eyes.

Angkot did not hesitate at all.

"We will forget the angels, all of them," he said. "Let's go back to our old tree in the yard."

They ran back, trotting happily side by side.



CHAPTER VII

The Carabao Race

OF ALL THE NEW AND STRANGE THINGS HE HAD SEEN in the lowlands, Angkot found the carabaos hardest to understand. He wanted to like them, yet there was something about the big, slow-footed animals that always frightened him. Twice he had gone secretly to the family's carabao when it was safely tied to a post under the granary. He had hoped to make friends with the animal. He had had the courage to touch one black whisker very lightly, but the creature had switched his tail and

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had stepped sideways so suddenly that Angkot had run away.

There were usually a great many carabaos around the schoolyard, if it was not the season for planting. The grass was better there and the shade was deep under the camatchile trees in the early hours of the afternoon. They would be dreaming there, standing as closely together as their long horns would permit, tails swinging lazily, ears flipping forward and back, chewing endless wads of grass.

The older boys made up a game. When they found the carabaos standing like that they would arm themselves with small sticks and stones and suddenly charge the herd, whooping at the tops of their voices. The great animals would wheel in confusion, collide and override each other and then scatter in all directions.

It was after a particularly successful raid one day that they thought of having the race.

"We could have it at noon," Pedro Santos had said. "I'll bet I could win. Our carabao is old but he is a good runner."

"You have never seen our spotted one go," Jose said. "He would leave you far behind in the dust."

"But our Loto is only two years old," Domingo

broke in. "He is always eager to run and neither of you will have a chance against him."

Angkot listened for a time and then went over to the tree that he called his. He wouldn't be in the race because he had no carabao. And if he did have a carabao, he would probably be afraid to ride on him.

Angela found him there, leaning his head against the tree trunk, and scuffing his foot in the dust. She guessed at once what the matter was.

"Are you sad because you will not be in the race? I will ask my father if he will permit you to ride our carabao. Wouldn't you like that?"

Angkot stared at her. She didn't know how he felt about carabaos then. She hadn't thought that he might be afraid to ride in the race.

"Come and see our carabao," she urged. "He's so gentle that he wouldn't hurt a fly. Unless, of course, the fly was biting him."

They walked across the yard to the shade in which the animal stood. Angela patted the black head fondly and the big beast seemed to enjoy it.

"Now you touch him," Angela said. "He will not hurt you in the least."

Angkot put his hand timidly on the sleek black side and was surprised at the silky warmth of it. He moved up to the head and looked into the mild

black eyes and rubbed his finger gently at the base of an ear.

"Oh, he likes that very much," Angela cried. "You will be friends now. Get on his back and see if I am not right."

She helped him up and Angkot seated himself astride the broad back. The animal stood so still that he began to lose his fears. He dared to move a little and even tried sitting backward. Angkot gave the carabao an extra pat as they went away.

"That animal has a kind heart," Angkot said happily. "I could see it in his eyes."

When they had almost reached the schoolhouse again, there was a great snort and the pounding of hoofs behind them. Angela grabbed Angkot's arm and pulled him behind a tree. A huge light-colored carabao galloped past them, blowing his breath into the dust and shaking his long curved horns.

"Is something the matter with him?" Angkot asked.

"I don't know. That's old Francisco. He does that all the time. He's not to be trusted. You must get out of his way when you see him coming."

There was no date set for the race yet, but the boys spoke of it to each other every day. There were challenges hurled and even small bets were

made. They teased Angkot about his having no carabao but he didn't tell them of his plans. He went often to touch the carabao of Angela's father. Sometimes he took a handful of tender grass or a bunch of fresh leaves. They were such good friends now he was never afraid to climb on his back or even to sit on his head. The beast's gentleness was becoming a problem to Angkot.

When the other boys practiced their steeds for the race, they carried a stick or a small whip to hurry the animal along. Some dug their heels into the animal's ribs. Angkot looked into the eyes of his carabao and knew that he could never bear to hit the gentle creature or hurt him in any way. Yet, if the beast did not go fast, he would be last in the race and the boys would laugh at him and he couldn't bear that either. The matter required a great deal of thinking.

He would leave the other children at noon and go to his tree. He would climb to the lowest branch. It was broad and almost flat on the upper side and he could lie there on his back and stare up at the sky. No one came to disturb him. Not even Angela knew of this secret place.

He was there one day drowsing in the shimmering heat, when he heard a noise below him. He looked down and his heart stood still. Old Fran-

cisco had chosen to come and stand in the shade of this very tree. Francisco was not too peaceful either, for he was pawing the ground and rolling his big head from side to side. Angkot wondered what he would do if the school bell rang. Would it be safe to get down from the tree or would it be better to stay there until the carabao decided to go away? Angkot thought that he would stay there in the mango tree.

He must have fallen asleep, and he woke up suddenly to find everything happening at once. Something heavy hit him in the middle of the stomach and it made him jump. When he jumped he lost his balance on the limb and, though he clutched madly at branches around him, he could grasp only one very small one which broke off as his full weight came on it. So he fell, not far, but in such a way that he came down neatly astride of Old Francisco's back. He had only a glimpse of the mango that had fallen on his stomach and rolled away on the ground, when the surprised Francisco gave a snort and whirled away from the tree.

Then there was a great noise and down the dusty street came the schoolboys on their carabaos. They hadn't told him that the race was today but here they came, shouting at the tops of their voices. Some had small whips to make their steeds go

faster; some kicked their heels into the animals' sides. Some only yelled and waved their arms. The noise grew louder and the dust rose in a choking cloud. Without any urging from Angkot, Francisco plunged after the others.

The teacher and the children and many of the villagers came running to watch the race. Angkot caught a glimpse of Angela's pale, anxious face as they flashed past. Because he had started late, Francisco was far behind the others and Angkot knew he must make him go faster. He hadn't noticed until now that he still held the small limb that had broken off when he fell. Now he swung it high and gave the carabao a whack on the side. It must have hurt Francisco's pride, for he put his head down and gave a loud snort. Angkot thought he was going to refuse to go on. But Francisco raised his head and began to run, doggedly and surely, as one who intends to win.

They went by the three slowest carabaos at once and Angkot patted Francisco's neck. He went around three more as if they were only walking. Slowly but gradually he gained on the next two and passed them. They were third from the front now. Angkot switched the sweaty neck lightly and they moved into second place. Only Domingo on



They passed Domingo by a full length.

the young Loto were head of them now and the end of the race was in sight.

Angkot switched harder. Francisco shook his head angrily and broke into a full gallop. They passed Domingo by a full length and a cheer went up from the watchers. A man threw his hat high in the air and a woman hurled a red flower at the flying pair. They crossed the finish mark and Francisco increased his speed. Angkot wondered if he would ever stop running.

They thundered past the last house on the street and suddenly it came to Angkot that Francisco was going straight to the river and he would never stop until he was deep in the water. There was nothing to do but fall off and let the animal go his way. Angkot swung his leg over and let himself relax for the fall. He landed on his side and rolled away from the thudding feet. When he brushed off the dust and grass and scrambled to his feet, he was surprised to find that he wasn't hurt at all. He began to walk back to the school.

He hadn't gone far when a crowd of people came running to meet him.

"Polon, the winner," they cried to Angkot. "Weren't you frightened? Who knew Francisco could run like that?" They wanted to touch his hand. They patted him on the head. But the big

schoolboys did a most surprising thing. They carried him on their shoulders back to the school. They wanted to carry him into the room that way but the teacher stopped them. He came hurrying up as the crowd surged into the yard.

"I'm very glad," he said. "I'm really very glad."

Angkot said, "Yes, sir," and his knees shook under him but he hadn't the least idea why the teacher was glad.



CHAPTER VIII

Angkot's Return

IT WAS SPRING AGAIN AND THE LOWLAND VILLAGE was fragrant with buds and blossoms and new green leaves. The men were busy preparing their small patches of earth for seeds. Birds were nesting or feeding their young. Everyone sang at his work and laughed in the warmth of the sun.

Angkot was happier too, for he felt spring in the air. People had been kinder to him since the carabao race. They often did things to help him. He was allowed to do some of the work about the house and the granary now and it pleased him to do it

well. At school the children always asked him to show them how to do things. It made him very proud when they did this but he never let them see it. He still could not feel exactly like them. It bothered him and he used to go alone to lie under the trees and try to understand it.

He was under the tamarind tree one Sunday morning when he first heard the wood pigeon. Its cry was so sad that it caught his ear at once. He listened again and the clear, sobbing call was unmistakable. He flew to the house and called to the others. They had heard nothing but they came out in the yard and listened. When the mournful sound came again, they looked at each other uneasily.

"It always means something bad," the man said and he went heavily back to his preparations for church.

There was an air of tenseness at the church too. Others had heard the pigeon and they couldn't guess what it meant. They shook their heads and crossed themselves whenever they spoke of it.

But nothing happened. After their dinner, the young people went to the river as usual. The old people drowsed and the young men whispered through the window to the pretty young women. Angkot didn't feel like going to the river but he

found it impossible to sit still. He sat under the tree a while but after a time he went wandering about the granary.

The carabao was tied there in the shade and Angkot fed him a few handfuls of grass. He patted his neck and climbed on his back but there was no fun in it. He found a crooked stick and went for a walk, using the stick as an old man uses a cane.

When he came back it was dusk. He walked around the house to see that everything was in its place. It was very quiet until he bumped into a drowsy chicken and it gave a frightened squawk. Then the dogs set up a dismal howling. He went up the ladder and spread his mat and tried to sleep but he was awake a long time for the night was full of sounds.

In the morning he forgot his uneasiness, for it was a school day and there was much to do. The teacher tried to answer all their questions about the pigeon. He said there was no proof that the cry of a wood pigeon was a warning of anything at all and that they would just go on with their work as usual.

At ten o'clock the church bell set up a wild clamor and the teacher hurried out of the room. A man was running through the street, shouting

as he ran. The teacher came back immediately. His face was pale but his voice was low and controlled.

"Go to your homes at once," he said. "Do not stop for anything. Hurry as fast as you can!"

Angkot went out with the others and they all began to run. There were grownups running too, in all directions. No one said anything to anyone but he could see fear in their faces. When he raced into the yard he saw a strange sight. People were carrying everything out of their houses. The carabao was tied to the front fence and they were loading things on his back. The men raced to the granary and came back with sacks of rice. The women ran up and down the ladder bringing cups and jars and cooking pots. Every woman was weeping but not one stopped to dry her tears. Angkot had to ask a question.

"What is it that has happened? Is there a fire?"

No one stopped to answer him. The man said crossly:

"Couldn't you be gathering a few coconuts or doing something useful instead of asking questions? Hurry, there's no time to waste."

Angkot ran to the coconut trees and began to climb. When he was near the top he could see all the people in their yards and he saw what they were doing. They were piling food on carts, on

bamboo sleds, on carabao, and on each other's backs. They were driving the pigs and goats into flocks and tying the legs of chickens together. An old woman sat on the ground and cried into her dress. An old man stood quietly knocking his head against a tree until his son came and led him away.

He threw down a dozen fruits and came down carefully so as not to fall. When he brought them to the yard, the women and the children and the carabao had gone. The man was searching through a big box inside the house. He came out with the bolo that he used in the cane fields and a handmade pistol. His face was scowling and black with anger. He looked at Angkot in surprise.

"They've gone on," he shouted. "Run to the Town House. You'll catch them there."

Angkot only stood and stared and the man was angrier still.

"You little fool! Are you going to grow there? You'll be killed. Run!"

"Are you not coming with us?"

The man seemed not to have heard the question. He lighted a small bundle of sticks and held the flame close to the dry straw roof of his house. He ran to the granary and did the same thing. Angkot waited no longer.

At the Town House the roads were choked with

people and their belongings and the air was filled with the noises of the animals and the children. A man climbed to the highest step and motioned for quiet. His voice was stern.

"Go to the mountains," he said. "Keep close together and travel as rapidly as you can. We will try to hold the enemy here. God be with you!"

He left the step and the people formed into a line and the line began to move slowly out of the village. Angkot looked at the empty schoolhouse as they passed by. The doors stood open and the rooms were strangely quiet. Farther down the road a man stood waving.

A little girl left the line and ran crying back to him and clung to his hand. The man stooped to comfort her and she put her arms around him. In a moment he rose, but the child still clung to him. The man slapped her lightly and pushed her from him. She ran back to her place in the line and Angkot saw that it was Angela but he did not speak.

All day the line moved toward the mountains, stopping only long enough to let the animals drink when they crossed the streams. The smallest children cried and their mothers carried them in addition to their own burdens. The old men and women wept that they were too tired and old and

begged the others to go on without them. But the line went on and somehow they went with it.

The sky was growing dark when they came to the end of the road. There were no marks or signs to show the way to the mountains. The line halted and the leaders gathered to decide what they could do.

Angkot and Marcela had been walking together and they were glad when the line stopped because it gave them a rest. Marcela sat on a clump of ferns and stretched her legs.

"My feet hurt badly," she said, "but I don't want anyone to think I'm a baby."

Angkot touched her hand shyly. "You're not a baby. You're very brave. You haven't cried once."

"Neither have you," she said. "Didn't you feel like crying when we left the village?"

He nodded his head. "I didn't like to see the houses burning. It was very sad. But if we go high in the mountains we might come to my village. I'd like to see it again."

The leader drummed on a log for silence. When the talking had stopped and all the line was still, he climbed up on the log and spoke.

"We need someone who has been in the mountain country; someone who has been in the highest parts. Who knows the way there?"

Marcela seized Angkot's arm in sudden excitement.

"Surely there is someone," the leader pleaded. "Let him come forward at once for there is no time to lose."

Marcela shook Angkot's arm. "Go!" she whispered, "they're asking for you."

Angkot blinked his eyes. "For me? Who is asking for me? And why?"

Marcela had no patience with him. She got behind him and shoved him until he was standing before the leader. The man stared at the small figure in front of him.

"You!" he said. "Surely you are too small to know the mountains."

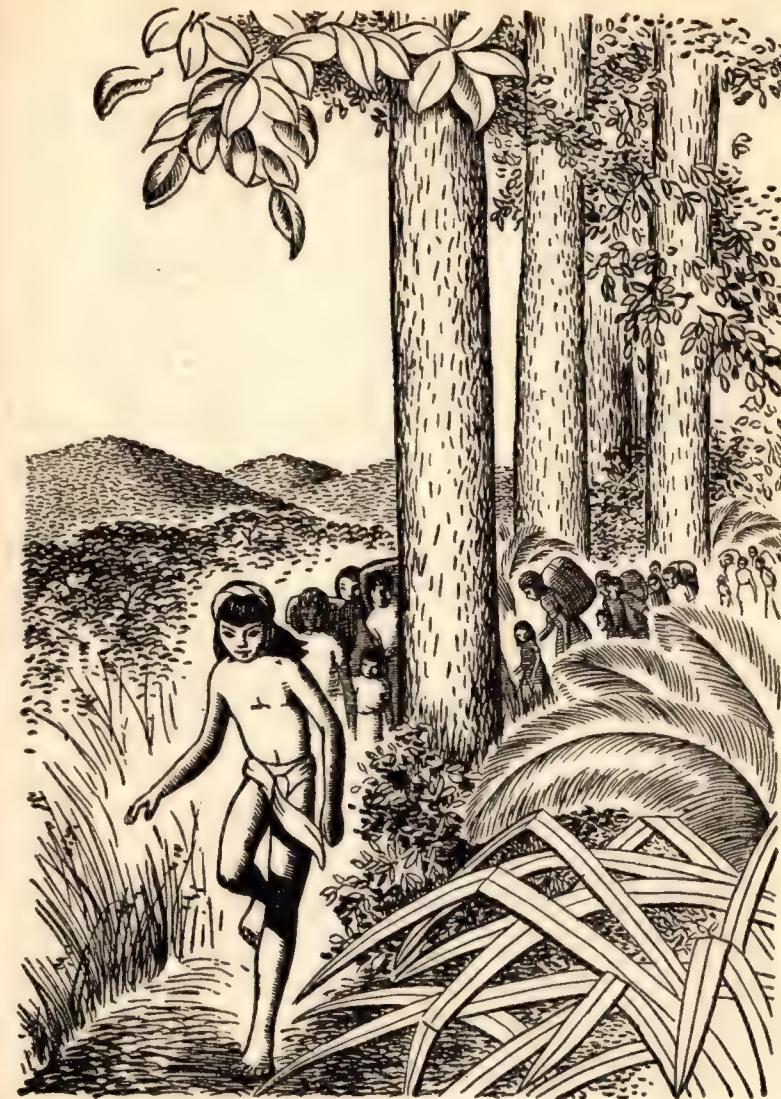
Marcela stuck her head out from behind Angkot. "He is Polon, the mountain boy," she said proudly.

The leaders talked together in low tones.

"We will follow you," they said. "Lead the way."

So the long line of people took up their burdens and followed Angkot and he walked proudly in front of them until total darkness came and he could not even see the openings between the trees. He could not guess in what direction to go and the men signaled for a stop.

The runners went back along the line and said they would rest here until morning. Some of the



He walked proudly in front of them.

people ate the cooked food they had brought. Others fell on the ground where they had stopped and slept without eating. Angkot found a spot nicely hidden in the bushes. He pulled grass and made a soft bed. When he was lying on it he could look straight up at the stars and he was reminded of the night the hunters returned with the wild pigs and all his mountain village had feasted.

Then suddenly one of the stars came down out of the sky and sat on a branch of the tree and began to talk to him.

"You've come back," the star said to Angkot and its voice was like faint music. He tried to say something but not a word would come out of his mouth.

"We've been very pleased with you," the star went on. "We thought you'd be coming back. If you hadn't, we should have sent for you, I think. And you're a leader now. It's what we expected of you."

Angkot wanted to be polite and say "thank you" to the star but it jumped off the branch and hung suspended just in front of him. He got up to take it in his hands for he had always wondered how a star would feel. When he touched one point it felt warm and furry. He moved his hand higher and it felt solid and round.

There was a soft little laugh and he opened his eyes. Dawn was just coming to the forest and he saw that he wasn't touching a star at all but that he was standing with his hand on the Ogsa's neck and the animal was gazing at him fondly. Angkot threw his arms around the big neck and hugged as hard as he could. He wanted to laugh and cry at the same time and then he wanted to call Marcela. Before he had done any of them the Ogsa began to talk.

"You're glad to be back," he said gravely. "We knew you'd come sometime."

"I should have come before," Angkot said. "I guess I forgot a little. I'm ashamed now."

"No reason why you should be," the Ogsa said easily. "You weren't quite ready yet."

There were sounds of others around them. They were getting ready to travel again.

"I wish you didn't have to go," Angkot said. "You won't want them to see you, I suppose."

"Go?" The Ogsa looked hurt. "I've come to take you back where I found you. Do you think you could find your way back alone? Not through these thickets! I don't care about the others. They can't see me anyway. I'll just walk on ahead and they'll never know I'm here."

The line was soon on its way. It was cool in the

shade of the trees and birds twittered from every side. They began to climb a steep, winding trail and when they looked back, they could see the village they had left only yesterday. Great clouds of smoke were rising from it and there were sounds like the rolling of thunder.

"Big guns!" the leaders said and shook their clenched fists at the smoke. "The black-hearted dogs!"

All day they climbed and turned, watching the sky and the backward trail. They moved rapidly, for Angkot knew every turning and he never hesitated. The men marveled at his sureness.

"Look at him," they said. "It is as if a secret power were guiding him."

The Ogsa sniffed and plunged into a particularly heavy growth of brush. "Did you hear that?" he said.

Angkot laughed so hard that he didn't see where he was going and he caught his pants on a bush and made a great tear in the leg. He took the pants off and left them on the ground and went on in his ba-ag.

"It's cooler this way," he explained. The Ogsa nodded approval.

It was nearly dusk when he had another accident. He cut his toe on a sharp stone. His father

would have bound it with leaves to stop the bleeding. Angkot had learned to put a bandage on his cuts. He tore a strip from his white shirt and tied it tightly. He left the shirt lying at the side of the trail.

Then they came to a place that he remembered. He had followed the hunters as far as this one day and then his father had discovered him and sent him back. He quickened his steps until he was almost running. Even the Ogsa had to hurry. But the leaders called a halt and said they would stop there for the night.

For a moment Angkot thought that he would go on alone because he knew he could reach his village in a very short time. But when he had lain down on his grass bed he went to sleep at once and he forgot that he was in such a hurry.

He thought the caravan would never get started the next morning. They had never been so slow. But it didn't matter much for at noon they came around a curve and there was the clearing and the village, exactly as they were when he left them.

Angkot began to run. The dogs set up a terrible barking. The women stopped their cooking at the open fires and shaded their eyes with their hands. The men stood up and reached for their bows and arrows.

When he saw them doing that, Angkot's heart gave a great jump. He had forgotten that his people would think the lowlanders enemies.

"Wait, wait!" he shouted. "Let me tell you about them. Then decide what to do. You must not act too quickly."

He ran among them, speaking his own language, telling them how the lowlanders had found him and cared for him and taught him to be like them. He told how the cruel enemy had come and they had burned all their stored grains and their houses and had run away to the mountains.

"They are good—they are like us," he pleaded. "Can we not be friends and help them?"

The men said nothing. Their eyes darted back and forth at the lowland men and their faces were scowling. Then one man stepped forward and Angkot saw that it was the tumunoh and that he had been listening carefully to everything he had said.

"Bring their leaders," the tumunoh said. Angkot brought the lowland leaders. They talked together rapidly for a few moments and then the tumunoh made the sign of friendship. Angkot sighed in relief.

He began to look about his village. It seemed strange and yet it was not strange. The tree houses

and the long ladders— His eye fell on the baby deer over at the edge of the clearing. The animal had grown larger since he had been gone. But he was still a captive deer; his tiny feet were still bound by the grass ropes. Would he never leap or run like other deer?

Angkot ran and knelt beside him. He broke the ropes but the deer made no attempt to go away. Angkot urged him gently toward the woods, walking at his side until they came to a narrow trail into the thicket. Suddenly the deer's head came up, his pace quickened, and he went on down the slope until he was out of sight. Angkot hurried back to the clearing.

He had forgotten that he had left the Ogsa with the others when he ran to talk to the men. Now he could see the animal just ahead of him, walking among the trees. There was something strange about his body—it was like a thin white cloud and he could see the trees right through him.

“Wait for me,” Angkot shouted, “I want to thank—” But the deer did not stop at all. He smiled a faint smile and then he was completely gone.

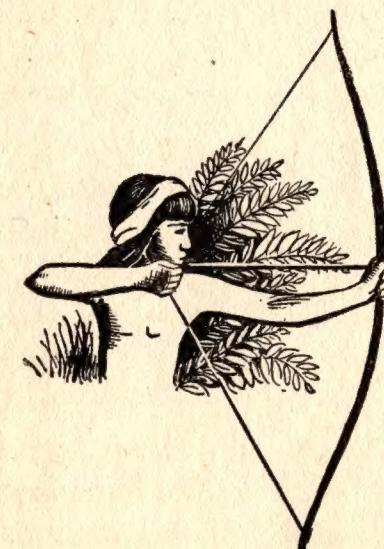
Angkot turned and went back to the village, dragging his toes thoughtfully in the dust. When he came to the clearing, Lamang and Aponitao came running to meet him. It was fat Lamang who

spoke first. He threw his arms around Angkot and gasped, “We didn’t know—we thought you must have been killed!” Then he held him off at arm’s length. “Where have you been for so long? What happened to you? Are you the same as you always were—you are not changed?” he asked anxiously, searching Angkot’s face.

Angkot’s mind went back to the school, the carabao, the lowland village, to the Ogsa and the teacher and to the white clothes he had worn. He adjusted his ba-ag more comfortably.

“I think, Lamang,” he said slowly, “I think I am almost the same.”

Then he went to look after his lowland friends.





CARVETH

Jungle Roy

LONGMANS

